

The Cloak

The VISN 3 Palliative Care E-Newsletter

U.S. Department of
Veterans Affairs

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VISN 3 Palliative Care Program Update: FY 2010 Accomplishment Submitted by Therese Cortez, NP, ACHPN

VISN 3 Palliative Care Program was honored with the American Hospital Association's prestigious 2010 Circle of Life Award. VISN 3 is the first organization in the Veterans Health Administration to receive this award.

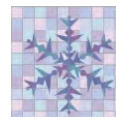
Innovations:

- Standardization of care processes and communication across setting and sites
- Use of data for quality improvement and strategic planning
- Support for all patients with critical illness in ICUs through the implementation of the Comfort and Communication Quality Measures
- Continuity and partnership with the community

Each year, the American Hospital Association's Circle of Life Award recognizes three programs from across the nation who demonstrate innovative programs in the delivery of palliative and end of life care.

The VISN 3 Palliative Care Program continues to advance through ongoing quality improvement, access to hospice and palliative care in all venues of care, staff education and mentorship, outreach to veterans and partnership with the hospice community on a national, state, VISN and regional level.

- VISN 3 continues to show sustained improvement and penetration of palliative care in *all facilities and in all venues of inpatient care*.
- 79% of inpatient deaths (acute and Community Living Center) died with Palliative Care services (increase from 76% in FY 09)
- 71% of acute care deaths with Palliative Care services (increase from 67% in FY 09)
- 63% of ICU deaths with Palliative Care services (increase from 54% in FY 09) and 91% Community Living Center deaths with Palliative Care services.
- Exceeded VISN Performance Measure for ADC for VA Paid home hospice.
- Exceeded National Transformational Measure 3 for Inpatient Deaths with Palliative Care Consultation within 12 months prior to death. VISN 3 Transformational Measure 3 for FY 10 was 76% (national target 45%).



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SAVE THE DATE!!!

VISN Palliative Care Quarterly Meetings

Location: JJP- Bronx
VAMC Conference

Room 3D-22

8:30AM-2:00PM

January 25, 2011

April 26, 2011

June 28, 2011

September 27, 2011





Celebrating the Circle of Life Award

On July 23, 2010, the VISN 3 Palliative Care Program became the first organization in VA to receive the prestigious American Hospital Association Circle of Life Award which honors high quality, innovative palliative care programs in the nation.

In bestowing the award, the Circle of Life Committee highlighted a number of best practices and innovations in VISN 3 including the standardization of palliative care practices, excellent communication across sites, the use of data for quality improvement, providing support for all patients with critical illness in ICUs and a well-established Hospice Veteran Partnership at the state and regional level.

A ceremony and reception was held to honor of the VISN 3 Palliative Care Teams on Tuesday, October 12, 2010 at the James J. Peters VA Medical Center.

Ms. Alicia Mitchell, Senior Vice President of the American Hospital Association presented the Circle of Life Award to Mr. Michael Sabo, Network Director, Dr. Judith Feldman, Network Chief Medical Officer, and the VISN 3 Palliative Care (PC) Teams, Facility Directors, Chiefs of Staff, Hospice and Palliative Care (HPC) Unit staff and ICU Champions. Dr. Scott Shreve, VA National Director of Hospice and Palliative Care Program, Diane Jones and Lauren Klepac, from the National VA HPC Program Office and Kathy McMahon, President and CEO of the Hospice and Palliative Care Association of New York State participated in the celebration.

Congratulations to our Palliative Care Consult teams, Hospice and Palliative Care Unit staff, ICU champions, Hospice Veterans Partnership, GRECC, IT and EES for the success of our VISN 3 Palliative Care Program.

Please wear your Circle of Life Award pins with great pride, as this will be a reminder of the outstanding accomplishment you have all achieved! Thank you for your dedication and commitment in providing our Veterans and their families high quality palliative and end of life care. Thank you for being the VISN 3 shining stars!



Left to Right: Dr. Judith Feldman, Network Chief Medical Officer; Mr. Michael Sabo, Network Director; Ms. Alicia Mitchell, American Hospital Association Senior VP



Dr. Scott Shreve, VA National Director of Hospice and Palliative Care Program



Dr. Carol Luhrs, VISN 3 Palliative Care Director



Members of VISN 3 Palliative Care Teams

JJP Bronx VAMC Palliative Care Team



Innovations:

Interprofessional Palliative Care Fellowship

Primary Palliative Care Provider Program



VA Hudson Valley Palliative Care Team



Innovations:

Mobile Palliative Care Team

Hudson Valley Regional Hospice Veteran Partnership

VA NYHHS Palliative Care Teams



Innovations:

Brooklyn

Acute Care Hospice Palliative Care Unit
Schwartz Rounds

New York

Palliative Care Consortium
Outpatient Palliative Care Clinic

St. Albans

New Hospice Palliative Care Unit
Nursing Assistant Education



VA NJHCS East Orange and Lyons Palliative Care Teams



Innovations:

East Orange

Clinical Research in Pain and Symptom Management

New Jersey Hospice Veteran Partnership

Lyons

New Hospice Palliative Care Unit

Nursing Assistant Training



HAPPY NEW YEAR

Northport VAMC Palliative Care Team



Innovations:

The Lighthouse HPC Unit

The Long Island Regional Hospice Veteran Partnership



Many Thanks to our Partners

as we share the Circle Of Life Award with you

Bronx VA Geriatric Research, Education & Clinical Center (GRECC)

Employee Education System

Hospice and Palliative Care Association of NYS

New Jersey Hospice and Palliative Care Organization

National VA Hospice Palliative Care Program Office



Bronx VA Geriatric Research, Education & Clinical Center (GRECC)



Hospice and Palliative Care Association of New York State
New Jersey Hospice and Palliative Care Organization



National VA Hospice Palliative Care Program Office

As VISN 3 celebrates the prestigious 2010 Circle of Life Award, we would like to thank our VISN and VA Facility leaders and the VA National Hospice and Palliative Care Program Office for their support and encouragement.

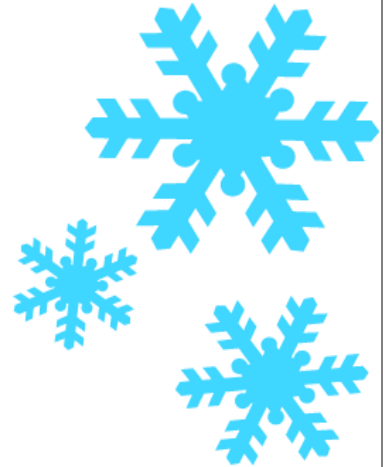
Nursing Research Looks at Nursing Assistants and End of Life Care

Submitted by Dorothy Wholihan, MSN, ANP-BC, AHPCN & Robyn Anderson, RN, MSN

The Palliative Care Program at the JJ Peters VAMC implemented the HPNA Nursing Assistant Training with an innovative and important twist: conducting a nursing research pilot study to assess the impact of the program on the knowledge and attitudes of nursing assistants. Although nursing assistants are the frontline of palliative care, especially in the long term care setting, little is available in the nursing literature evaluating educational techniques. Advanced practice nurses Dorothy Wholihan and Robyn Anderson, along with staff nurse Sabine Pierre-Louis, developed a pilot study to assess the impact of a day-long conference for nursing assistants. The curriculum, based on the HPNA curriculum for nursing assistants was lively and interactive. Curriculum content areas included communicating with patients and families, pain management, symptom management, and care during the last hours of life. They supplemented the basic content by creatively incorporating storytelling, video, small group activities, art-work, and competition into the 8 hour program. This program was presented on two separate occasions, and each participant was pinned with a Hospice and Palliative Care Nursing Assistant pin at the conclusion of the day. Using a non-randomized pre and post test design, they evaluated three major outcomes: 1) the nursing assistants' knowledge of palliative care, 2) attitudes about caring for dying patients, and 3) knowledge of ethical issues pertaining to dying patients with items adapted from the National VA Ethics Survey.

The study sample included 25 nursing assistants in the intervention group, with 8 as control participants. Nursing assistants came from all parts of the medical center. Study results found no differences in scores between the groups on a pre-test. After attending the conference, the intervention group showed significant improvement in post-test scores on the total score, as well as all three sub-tests, the total score increasing by an average 3.4 points or 15.5 % ($p < 0.05$). In comparing the results of intervention and control group post tests, the intervention group scores showed statistically significant improvement in both ethics and total scores ($p < 0.05$). Although the statistical significance of these findings was limited by small sample size, the researchers were satisfied by the positive trends that the day long program had a positive impact. Qualitatively, the researchers were interested in eliciting participant views on the rewards and challenges of end of life work. Issues such as powerlessness, fears of addiction, and team conflicts were identified. Subjectively, the participants voiced great appreciation for the day long format. They were unanimous in reporting that they felt more appreciated and empowered after attending the conference.

This pilot study has provided the foundation for future educational programs for nursing assistants at JJ Peters VAMC. The program has also resulted in assigning dedicated, specialty-trained nursing assistants to the Supportive Care Unit within the Community Living Center at JJ Peters. Wholihan, Anderson, and Pierre-Louis are currently preparing a manuscript for the publication of their results and would be happy to share the project logistics and impressions with anyone interested in replicating this program.



Accomplishments and Awards

Congratulations to all for their wonderful accomplishments!!!!

VISN 3 Board Certification in Palliative Care

Bronx

Robyn Anderson, APN
Elizabeth Clark, MD
Chaplain Dan Degyansky
Paulina Kim, MD
Aneita Morgan, RN
Dorothy Wholihan, APN

New Jersey

Barbara Arrowsmith, RN
Nancy Bael, MD
Vineesh Bhatnagar, MD
Natalie Callender, SW
Victor Chang, MD
Maryanne Gill, SW
Janice Knowles, RN
Jane Luo, MD
Zahira Shamsi, MD
Loveleen Sidhu, MD

Hudson Valley

Jeane Betti, RN
Supriyo Das, MD
Joby David, APN
Sandra Dumeng, RN
Mary Mantilla, SW
Rakesh Mehta, MD
Anna Plichta, MD
Christine Tremper, NA

Northport

Mary Bergen, RN
Joe Calandrino, MD
Marcella Fagan, RN
Alisa Foster, NA
Kenneth Kribs, RN
Robert Payton, NA
Charnette Simpson, RN
Chaplain Paul Swerdlow
Maryanne Tierney, SW
Kathleen Weston, NA

New York Harbor

Chaplain Sotar Alfonso-Lloyd
Alice Beal, MD
Arlene Blackett, APN
Louisa Daratsos, SW
Winsome Dyer, SW
Rosie Edwards, NA
Nancy Haliskoe, APN
Trula Hudson, NA
Michelle Irwin, APN
Jatinder Khokhar, MD
Andrea Leaf, MD
Dian Martinez, RN
Jill Roth, SW
Pecola White, NA

VISN

Carol Luhrs, MD
Therese Cortez, APN



VISN 3 Palliative Care Trainers

Bronx

Robyn Anderson, ELNEC/ PC NA
Emily Feliz, ELNEC CC
Paulina Kim, EPEC
Cheryl Lambert, ELNEC CC
Kayanne Mckenzie, ELNEC CC
Aneita Morgan, ELNEC CC
Carmen Ortiz, ELNEC CC
Sabine Pierre- Louis, PC NA
Mae Thammonxae, ELNEC CC
Dorothy Wholihan, PC NA

New Jersey

Maxine Anderson, ELNEC
Christine Betros, ELNEC
Janine Decker, ELNEC CC
Greg Gecale, ELNEC CC
Hanna Hermanowski, ELNEC CC, PC NA
Hattie Osbourne, ELNEC CC
Jocelyn Perez, PC NA
Getrude Philador, PC NA
Robyn Salerno, ELNEC CC
Loveleen Sidhu, EPEC
Yonghee You, ELNEC
Mei Wu, PC NA

New York Harbor

Armi Banzuela, ELNEC CC
Alice Beal, ELNEC CC
Arlene Blackett, PC NA
Louisa Daratsos, EPEC
Jennifer DiBiase, ELNEC
Winsome Dyer, ELNEC
Rosie Edwards, PC NA
Yvana Etienne, ELNEC CC
Francisca Go, PC NA
Nancy Haliskoe, ELNEC
Gwenn Hernandez, ELNEC
Ann Higgins, ELNEC CC
Trula Hudson, PC NA
Michelle Irwin, EPEC
Yelena Korenblyvum, ELNEC
Desiree Lawson, ELNEC CC
Kafilet Lewis, ELNEC
Kathleen Malone, ELNEC CC
Leonila Mariazeta, ELNEC
Dian Martinez, PC NA
Derrick Villareal, ELNEC

VISN

Carol Luhrs, EPEC
Therese Cortez, EPEC

Northport

Kimberly Bruno, ELNEC CC
Joe Calandrino, EPEC
Grace Carreon, ELNEC CC
Reisa Doyle, PC NA, ELNEC
Marcella Fagan, ELNEC CC
Kenneth Kribs, ELNEC CC
Angela Lesane, PC NA
Carol Martin- Lombarti, ELNEC CC
Linda McLoughlin, ELNEC CC
Shirley Pancir, ELNEC
Charnette Simpson, PC NA
Fran Smith, ELNEC CC
Alicia Stefaniak, ELNEC CC

Hudson Valley

Cheryl Barnard, PC NA
Karen Barnard, PC NA
Electa Brooks, PC NA
Rita Cruz, PC NA
Joby David, PC NA
Sandra Dumeng, PC NA
Evelyn Fisher, PC NA
Jasmine Johnson, PC NA
Mary Mantilla, EPEC
Shirley Thompson, PC NA



Spotlight: St. Albans Mourning and Bereavement Program

Submitted by Michelle Kehn, PhD & Winsome Dyer, LMSW

“It is difficult to accept death in this society because it is unfamiliar. In spite of the fact that it happens all the time, we never see it.” - Elisabeth Kubler-Ross



As providers in a palliative care program, we see death quite often; so often that we sometimes forget that our patient's family members probably have not. In an attempt to assist our patient's family members and friends move more smoothly through the process, we are in the process of developing a comprehensive grief and bereavement program at St. Albans.

What began as a bi-annual memorial service, planned and executed by our Social Worker has developed into a program that addresses the needs and concerns of family members both before and after the death of their loved one. Currently the program consists of a weekly Caregiver Support group, Bereavement support (both individual and group is available), and a bi-annual memorial service. The Caregiver support group is a weekly group facilitated by the Palliative Care Social Worker and Psychologist for any family member/friend. This intervention is aimed at assisting family members with their experience of the dying process of a loved one.

As we anticipate the opening of our new palliative care unit, we have thought about ways in which this program could be expanded to make it more available to a greater amount of our families. Ideas include providing: Family Room/ Afternoon Tea; Caregiver Support; Team Availability to Family; Professional Caregiver Support; Bereavement Support; and Memorializing Veterans.

To date we believe our program has been successful in providing some closure and peace to our patient's families while honoring our veterans. Here are just a few examples of the feedback we've received regarding the Memorial Service and our staff:

“It was comforting to me when they called each Veteran's name and lit a candle and said a prayer...The memorial was in keeping with the kind, compassionate care the team showed my father during his tenure there...I know my father and his fellow vets would feel honored by the wonderful memorial.”

“The service, which honored my husband and 29 other veterans, demonstrated the dedication and compassionate mission of the hospital staff to bring consolation and support to bereaved family members and friends...Knowing that their contributions were valued by their country will help me and all those who mourn to remember, heal and finally move on.”

“You [social worker] were always there to provide social work services and consultation. You are still supporting my family in your follow-up calls to help us through the grieving process. You too [NP] were available to speak to my mother and me about my uncle's health...Your counsel during his last month on Earth made it much easier for him to let go and move on to the next level of life...You two need to be publicly commended for your dedication and commitment to service during life's most uncomfortable stage.”

“We accepted your invitation to the memorial not knowing what to expect. We were very happy that we attended. The memorial presentation was respectful, honorable, entertaining and uplifting...It was truly an honor to their memory.”

In closing, while we think we are doing a good job taking care of our veterans and their families during this difficult time, we believe there is more we can do. What we have written above is our vision for doing just that.



News From The GRECC

Welcome to our 2010-2011 Class of Palliative Care Interprofessional Fellows

Oren Brody, DO completed a geriatric fellowship at Baystate Medical Center and continued as an attending geriatrician at the facility for one year before joining the fellowship.

Ruby Sharma, MD finished her Internal Medicine residency program at the University of Connecticut in Farmington, CT in June 2010.

Kate Rex-Kiss, MSW received her Master's Degree in Social Work from Lehman College. Kate was also an Associated Health Trainee at the GRECC during the second year of her MSW program.

Joshua Scott, PhD received his Doctor of Philosophy degree in clinical psychology in August 2010 while completing his pre-doctoral internship at James J. Peters VAMC in the Dual Diagnosis Program.

The GRECC would also like to welcome our new staff member Melissa Garrido, PhD. Melissa is a Research Health Science Specialist with the JJP REAP (Center for Research on Health Care Across Systems and Sites of Care). She joined the VA last July, and her research focuses on the relationships between mental illness and access to and outcomes of palliative care for veterans admitted to acute care facilities.

The Consortium of New York Geriatric Education Centers (CNYGEC) is a multi-faceted, competency-based clinically oriented training initiative, which draws on the alliances of our CNYGEC partners, geared to interprofessional training of healthcare professionals, students, and faculty throughout New York State. We train health care professionals in the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of acute, chronic and life threatening diseases, disabilities and other health problems of older New Yorkers. In 2011, we are offering an "Update on End-of-Life and Palliative Care" CME training which focuses on psychosocial, spiritual and religious aspects of palliative care in addition to symptom assessment and management. To learn more about this and other programs and to register online, please visit www.nygec.org.



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